

CLAIMS

I claim:

1. A chafer comprising a support frame, a food service pan, a cover, and a cover pivoting assembly, said cover having a peripheral edge, said support frame being arranged for releasably supporting said pan therein and for mounting said cover over said pan to enable said cover to be pivoted about a horizontal axis from a fully closed position through an intermediate partially open position to a fully open position, and vice versa, said cover pivoting assembly being arranged to enable said cover to be automatically held stable in said fully open, partially open or fully closed positions by the mere movement of said cover to any of said positions.

2. The chafer of Claim 1 wherein said peripheral edge of said cover is oriented in a generally horizontal plane adjacent said pan when said cover is in said fully closed position, said peripheral edge of said cover being oriented in a plane at approximately an obtuse angle to horizontal when said cover is in said partially open position, and said peripheral edge of said cover being oriented in a plane at a larger obtuse angle to horizontal when said cover is in said fully open position.

3. The chafer of Claim 2 wherein said cover has a center of gravity located so that said cover automatically returns to said fully closed position whenever said cover is oriented such that its peripheral edge is in a plane between said fully closed position and said partially open position.

4. The chafer of Claim 3 wherein said cover is arranged to be automatically held in any orientation wherein the peripheral edge of said cover is located in a plane between said partially open position and said fully open position.

5. The chafer of Claim 3 wherein said obtuse angle is approximately 100 degrees and wherein said larger obtuse angle is approximately 160 degrees.

6. The chafer of Claim 1 wherein said cover is releasably mounted on said support frame.

5 7. The chafer of Claim 6 comprising cover mounting means for preventing said cover from being removed from said support frame if said cover is in any position other than in said fully closed position.

10 8. The chafer of Claim 7 wherein said cover pivoting assembly comprises at least one trunnion sleeve having a longitudinal axis and at least one trunnion arranged for disposition within said sleeve for rotation about said longitudinal axis, said cover being arranged to be pivoted about said axis to assume any of said fully closed, partially open and fully open positions, said cover mounting means being coupled to said cover pivoting assembly.

15 9. The chafer of Claim 8 wherein said cover mounting means comprising a post fixedly secured to said cover, an opening in said trunnion sleeve and a contiguous slot in said trunnion sleeve, said opening being arranged for receipt of said post when said cover is in said fully closed position, said slot being arranged for receipt of said post when said cover is moved from said fully closed position toward said partially open or fully open position, said slot holding said post therein when said cover is in any position other than 20 said fully closed position.

10. The chafer of Claim 9 wherein said cover mounting means comprises a pair of posts fixedly secured to said cover at spaced apart locations and a pair of trunnion sleeves, each trunnion sleeve being arranged for receipt of a respective trunnion therein and having

an opening for receipt of a respective one of said posts and a contiguous associated slot into which said respective one of said posts moves when said cover is moved from its fully closed position toward said partially open or fully open position.

11. The chafer of Claim 9 wherein said slot is of a lesser width than the diameter of said opening, and wherein said post has an outside diameter just slightly less than the diameter of said opening, said post also including a shoulder portion having a width just slightly less than the width of said slot, said shoulder portion of said post being arranged to enter into said slot when said cover is moved to any position from said fully closed position.

12. The chafer of Claim 1 wherein said cover pivoting assembly comprises at least one trunnion sleeve having a longitudinal axis and at least one trunnion arranged for disposition within said sleeve for rotation about said longitudinal axis, said cover being coupled to said trunnion and arranged to be pivoted about said axis to assume any of said fully closed, partially open and fully open positions.

13. The chafer of Claim 12 wherein said cover pivoting assembly includes a post fixedly secured to said cover and an opening in said trunnion for receiving said post, said opening extending radially with respect to said longitudinal axis.

14. The chafer of Claim 12 wherein said chafer comprises a damper assembly for said cover.

15. The chafer of Claim 14 wherein said cover pivoting assembly includes a post fixedly secured to said cover and an opening in said trunnion for receiving said post, said opening extending radially with respect to said longitudinal axis, said damper assembly comprising an elongated member and a compressible member, said elongated member

being pivotably coupled to said support frame and pivotably coupled to said trunnion, said elongated member being disposed in a neutral orientation when said cover is in said fully closed position and being arranged to be pivoted to a pivoted position when said cover is pivoted towards said partially open or fully open position, said compressible member being arranged to be compressed when said cover is pivoted from said full closed position into said partially open or fully open positions.

16. The chafer of Claim 15 wherein said compressible member comprises a sleeve of a resilient material.

17. The chafer of Claim 15 wherein said cover mounting means comprising a post fixedly secured to said cover, an opening in said trunnion sleeve and a contiguous slot in said trunnion sleeve, said opening being arranged for receipt of said post when said cover is in said fully closed position, said slot being arranged for receipt of said post when said cover is moved from said fully closed position toward said partially open or fully open position, said slot holding said post therein when said cover is in any position other than said fully closed position.

18. The chafer of Claim 17 wherein said slot is of a lesser width than the diameter of said opening, and wherein said post has an outside diameter just slightly less than the diameter of said opening, said post also including a shoulder portion having a width just slightly less than the width of said slot, said shoulder portion of said post being arranged to enter into said slot when said cover is moved to any position from said fully closed position.

19. The chafer of Claim 1 additionally comprising at least one heating member arranged to be disposed on said support frame below said pan.

20. The chafer of Claim 1 wherein the support frame includes a support flange having plural legs depending downward therefrom.

21. The chafer of Claim 12 wherein said cover includes a sidewall and said cover mounting assembly is confined within the bounds of said sidewall when said cover is in said fully closed position so that no portion of said cover mounting assembly can be seen from outside said chafer.

22. The chafer of Claim 1 wherein said cover pivoting assembly enables said cover to be held stable in any position between said partially open position and said fully open position by the automatic application frictional engagement.

23. The chafer of Claim 22 wherein said cover pivoting assembly comprises at least one trunnion sleeve having a longitudinal axis and at least one trunnion arranged for disposition within said sleeve for rotation about said longitudinal axis, said cover being coupled to said trunnion and arranged to be pivoted about said axis to assume any of said fully closed, partially open and fully open positions.

24. The chafer of Claim 23 additionally comprising a member for applying a force to said trunnion to cause said trunnion to frictionally engage said trunnion sleeve.